

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MBABAN 00547 041143Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 ST-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-03 SS-15
/033 W

-----041156Z 020600 /15

O R 041000Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1269

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

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DELIVER TO AF/S PERRY AT OPENING OF BUSINESS MARCH 4

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CGEN, WZ

SUBJECT: AMBULANCE FOR KING SOBHUZA

REF: MBABANE 0532

1. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER KHUMALO, WHO IS ACTING PRIMIN
SINCE COLONEL MAPHEVU LEFT MARCH 3 FOR AFRO-ARAB MEETING,
MADE UNANNOUNCED VISIT TO MY HOUSE EVENING MARCH 3 TO
EXPRESS HOPE THAT ASSISTANCE REQUESTED EARLIER IN DAY ON
AMBULANCE CASE (REFTEL) WOULD PRODUCE QUICK RESULTS. HE
ASKED TO BE INFORMED SOON AS DEPARTMENT RESPONSE RECEIVED.

2. TURNING TO WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY MAIN PURPOSE OF HIS CALL,
KHUMALO "REVEALED" THAT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION EXIST
WITHIN CABINET CONCERNING DR. GILBERT. (HE DID NOT KNOW
THAT EMBASSY ALREADY AWARE, AS REPORTED MBABANE 0423.)
IDENTIFYING SELF AS GILBERT SUPPORTER, HE LEFT NO DOUBT
THAT ANTI-GILBERT FORCES WERE SEIZING ON AMBULANCE EPISODE
TO DISCREDIT GILBERT IN EYES OF KING. KHUMALO
SAID HE WOULD CONVENE MEETING MARCH 4 TO DETERMINE
WHETHER GILBERT HAD ACTED IMPROPERLY IN CONNECTION
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PAGE 02 MBABAN 00547 041143Z

WITH ACQUISITION OF AMBULANCE. KHUMALO PRESSED ME
HARD AS TO EXACTLY HOW CLOSE GILBERT HAD COME TO BEING
PROSECUTED FOR HIS SOLICITATION OF FUNDS IN US.
QUALIFYING MY REMARKS AS THOSE OF SOMEONE NOT
INVOLVED IN SWAZILAND MATTERS IN THAT PERIOD, I SAID
I UNDERSTOOD THAT ISSUE WAS MORE ONE OF GILBERT'S
HAVING PUT HIMSELF (AND THE PRINCE WHOM HE ACCOMPANIED

AND, BY EXTENSION, THE KING) IN POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING POSITION AS RESULT OF SOLICITING FUNDS WITHOUT NECESSARY LICENSES RATHER THAN OF GILBERT'S HAVING BEEN IN REAL DANGER OF BEING JAILED FOR THAT ACTIVITY. KHUMALO SAID THIS WAS PRECISELY THE CLARIFICATION WHICH HE SOUGHT AND WHICH HE WOULD USE AT MARCH 4 MEETING HE WOULD CHAIR ON THIS SUBJECT.

3. (FOLLOWING INDICATES HOW TEMPERS RUNNING ON THIS ISSUE: SEVERAL HOURS AFTER KHUMALO TELEPHONED ME TO REQUEST EMBASSY/DEPARTMENT ASSISTANCE PER REFTTEL, HE TELEPHONED EMBASSY AGAIN. CALL WAS TAKEN BY VICE CONSUL, DURING MY ABSENCE IN ANOTHER MINISTRY. KHUMALO WAS HIGHLY AGITATED THAT AN AMBULANCE STORY HAD APPEARED IN A SOUTH AFRICAN PAPER. HE SAID USG SHOULD HELP GET AMBULANCE DELIVERED BECAUSE "CADILLAC WAS ACQUIRED TO HELP US EXPORT PROGRAM" AND SO FORTH. IN HIS VISIT TO ME THAT EVENING, NEITHER KHUMALO NOR I MENTIONED THAT STRANGE CALL.)

4. AT OPENING OF BUSINESS MARCH 4, DR. GILBERT APPEARED AT EMBASSY UNANNOUNCED, SAYING KHUMALO HAD REQUESTED HIM SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM AMEMBASSY AS TO WHETHER IT "HAD ISSUED WARRANT" FOR GILBERT'S ARREST IN US. MENTIONING MINISTER S.S. NXUMALO BY NAME, GILBERT SAID HIS ENEMIES IN TALKING WITH KING WERE ATTRIBUTING SUCH STATEMENT TO AMEMBASSY. FROM OWN BACKGROUND AND FROM TALKS WITH SWAZILAND ATTORNEY GENERAL, GILBERT KNEW EMBASSY HAS NO SUCH POWER BUT HE WAS MERELY MAKING PRO FORMA INQUIRY AS REQUESTED. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MBABAN 00547 041143Z

I CONFIRMED EMBASSY COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN SUCH ACTION AND SAID I HAD TOLD KHUMALO LAST NIGHT THAT JAILING OR OTHER POLICE ACTION HAD NOT BEEN ENVISAGED IN THIS CASE. GILBERT STRESSED THAT AMBULANCE IS PURE GIFT WITH NO SOLICITED FUNDS INVOLVED; THIS IS POINT ON WHICH KING IS SEEKING COMPLETE ASSURANCE, GILBERT SAID. WHEN I ASKED GILBERT, LOW-KEY, WHETHER HE HAD DONE ANY FUNDS SOLICITATION AT ALL IN US, HE SAID NO, ALTHOUGH HE LATER MENTIONED HIS GOING TO NEW YORK FOR SOME ENGAGEMENTS AFTER HAVING WATCHED MT. ZION CHURCH AUTHORITIES PURCHASE AMBULANCE IN BALTIMORE.

5. STATING THE OBVIOUS THAT IT WAS IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST TO GET AMBULANCE DELIVERED SOONEST, I ASKED GILBERT WHETHER FUNDS WOULD BE FOUND SOMEWHERE TO GET AMBULANCE OFF DURBAN DOCKS. HE REPLIED THAT ABSOLUTELY, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, GOS OR ROYAL COMMITTEE WOULD COME UP WITH FUNDS TO PERMIT EASTER DELIVERY/DEDICATION CEREMONY. HIGHEST PRIORITY NEED

WAS FOR WORD FROM MT. ZION CHURCH AS TO ITS INTENTIONS
WITH RESPECT TO PAYING OUTSTANDING SHIPPING BILLS.

6. I TOLD GILBERT I HAD BEEN UNABLE, IN POST'S EDITION
OF DISTRICT TELEPHONE DIRECTORY, TO LOCATE TELEPHONE
NUMBER FOR MT. ZION CHURCH AT ADDRESS KHUMALO HAD GIVEN
ME OR TO LOCATE CLERGYPERSON NAMED ANNIE BELLE HAGLER
IN THE DISTRICT. HE SAID CHURCH WAS NOW PART OF LARGER
ORGANIZATION CALLED COMMUNITY CHURCHES OF CHRIST.
EMBASSY ALSO UNABLE TO FIND THAT LISTING IN ITS EDITION
OF DISTRICT DIRECTORY.

7. OWING TO PRESSURES FROM BOTH PRO-GILBERT AND ANTI-
GILBERT FACTIONS, EMBASSY WILL APPRECIATE RECEIVING WORD
ABOUT DEPARTMENT'S CONTACT WITH MT. ZION CHURCH BY
IMMEDIATE CABLE.

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PAGE 04 MBABAN 00547 041143Z

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Sent Date: 04-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
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